



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Near East Department

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

31 March 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0930-16

Thank you for your e-mail of 6 October asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

Under the FOIA, please provide me with an electronic copy of all recorded information you hold regarding UK attendees at the funeral of Shimon Peres, including but not limited to:

- *A list of individuals who attended (eg. was Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis part of the official UK delegation or did he go under his own steam?)*
- *The process by which they were selected*
- *Travel arrangements, including whether non-government attendees (eg. Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis) paid for their own flights*

I am writing to confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has now completed its search for the information you requested. I can confirm that the FCO does hold information relevant to your request. We considered the material under section 27 (International Relations) of the FOIA, and have decided that the public interest lies in favour of a release of some of the information. Please find attached in digest format the information we are able to disclose.

This reply refers to those who attended the funeral of Shimon Peres as part of the UK delegation. There was no formal process for selecting this delegation and they were only a formal delegation in the sense that the FCO had some involvement in organising their travel.

There were several other UK travellers to the funeral.

As to the rest of the information, I wish to advise you that it cannot be disclosed for the reasons given below.

We are withholding some information we hold under exemption 27(1)(a) of the FOIA which recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed. In this case, the release of the information relating to your request could harm our relations with the states in question.

The application of Section 27(1)(a) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with Israel. However, s.27(1)(a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interest through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information detailing our relationship and exchanges with the Israeli Government could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and Israel. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests with Israel, which would not be in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Some of the information you that you requested has been withheld under Section 38(1)(b) – Information that would endanger the safety of any individual. In applying the public interest test we again took into consideration the factors in favour of disclosure; in this case that releasing such information would demonstrate openness and public accountability towards the security arrangements for the protection of the Foreign Secretary and his delegation. We balanced these against the grounds for non-disclosure. We felt that disclosure of details with regard to the security and transport arrangements for the Foreign Secretary's visit to Israel could be used by others in the future which would be likely to pose a significant risk to any individual's personal safety during similar visits. There is a strong public interest in withholding information, for example, Foreign and Commonwealth Office planning and procedures for preparing overseas visits, particularly where disclosure could endanger the safety of individuals. On balance we concluded that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Some of the information you have requested, is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Yours sincerely,

Near East Department



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.